

In Memoriam



Jaime Herrera-Acosta
(1938–2005)

Jaime Herrera-Acosta, without doubt, one of the most outstanding Mexican nephrologists and an internationally known researcher and scientist, died of pulmonary cancer in Mexico City, Mexico on July 30, 2005, at the age of 67 years.

Jaime, as he was called by his friends and collaborators, was an exceptional researcher, clinician, and educator in nephrology and renal physiology. Our medical and academic community has lost a giant in this field. In addition, he was a pioneer investigator and academician for the Mexican nephrology community, mentor of dozens of Mexican nephrologists and many other nations of the Latin American community. He was a strong leader and developer of an “academic Mexican nephrology” core to which he devoted time, effort, and intellect in a passionate way. Worldwide, the nephrology community is saddened by his death and we pay tribute to his accomplishments and to his personal and individual virtues. Jaime was lost yet will not be forgotten.

Jaime Herrera-Acosta was born in Chihuahua, Mexico, in 1938. In Mexico City, he received his medical degree from the National University of Mexico in 1963. After medical school, he continued his training in internal medicine at the “Hospital de Enfermedades de la Nutrición,” where he became chief resident and later initiated his training in the same institution under the guidance of Dr. Alfonso Rivera, who preceded Jaime in death, and Dr. José Carlos Peña, who became one of his closest friends and partner. In 1967, he joined the laboratory of Floyd Rector and Donald Selding in Dallas, Texas, as a research fellow, spending 3 years of training under their guidance. During this time he defined his major area of interest and scientific development. He acquired expertise in the use of micropuncture techniques for the study of renal physiology and initiated a career in this field that would later prove to be fruitful in the acquisition of knowledge that would disentangle potential mechanisms of renal and microvascular disease. In 1968, Jaime returned to Mexico City, initially working at the “Instituto Nacional de la Nutrición Salvador Zubirán” and starting one of the first micropuncture laboratories in Latin America. In 1983, he became Head of the Department of Nephrology of the “Instituto Nacional de Cardiología Ignacio Chávez,” also in Mexico City and professor of nephrology of the National University, positions at which he developed most of his scientific and academic career. During this time, over 70 nephrology residents graduated from the program he headed and 20 postgraduate students completed training and obtained a Ph.D. or a Master’s degree under his guidance. He dedicated special attention to the training of nephrologists. A significant proportion of the Mexican nephrology community received their training under his guidance and within his department. In addition, his department proved to be a strong bastion for the training of nephrologists from different countries from the Caribbean and Central America.

During his very productive academic career, Jaime published over 115 scientific papers in peer reviewed journals, 19 chapters in books, and a text book of nephrology, in collaboration with Manuel Martínez-Maldonado and Jose Luis Rodicio. He was the recipient of multiple awards and distinctions, including the Research award from the National Academy of Surgery (1974) and National Academy of Medicine of Mexico (1975). He was a member of the editorial board of multiple international nephrology journals, including *Kidney International*. He served as President

and cofounder of the Mexican Certifying Board of Nephrology (1991), received the International Distinguished Medal, National Kidney Foundation, USA (1993), was President of the Inter-American Society of Hypertension (1999–2001), and served as Chairman for the Regional (Latin American) Commission for Global Advancement of Nephrology of the International Society of Nephrology from 1995 to 2000.

Jaime Herrera-Acosta devoted most of his efforts to increase our knowledge on the pathophysiology of systemic hypertension and the participation of the kidney in this process. To achieve this goal he often employed classical micropuncture and physiologic laboratory techniques geared to disclose unknown mechanisms participating in the genesis of systemic hypertension and of renal diseases. During the last period of his career he and two of his closest friends, Richard J. Johnson from Gainesville, Florida, and Bernardo Rodríguez-Iturbe from Maracaibo, Venezuela, joined efforts and created an extraordinary collaborative team advocated to the study of the pathogenesis of hypertension and kidney disease. His contribution to the understanding of the participation of microvascular, tubular, and inflammatory kidney injury in the pathogenesis of essential hypertension, employing micropuncture techniques is of singular value. In collaboration with these same investigators as well as with Martha Franco and other coinvestigators from Mexico City, he proposed important mechanisms to understand progression of renal disease, focusing on the imbalance of vasodilatory and vasoconstrictive factors of the glomerulus and in particular on the participation of the vasoconstriction of the efferent arteriole in multiple experimental conditions leading to renal injury and to end-stage renal disease.

Professor Jaime Herrera-Acosta was a giant for the development of science and nephrology in Mexico and Latin America. He has left us a legacy in our academic community that will not be forgotten. Testimony of this is the long list of fellows, collaborators, and friends who remember him fondly and with admiration.

His outstanding success in science and medicine was not less significant in other matters of life. Rosa María, his beloved wife, his three children, Jaime (who preceded him in death), Juan Pablo, and María Rosa, and his grandchildren were a strong and innermost part of his life. We share with them their loss and express our respect and gratitude for sharing Jaime with all of us. We will always keep in our memory his legacy, his leadership, his keen intellect, and his friendship that enriched our lives.

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